



President George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS is the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease—a five-year, \$15 billion, multifaceted approach to combating the disease in more than 120 countries around the world.

U.S. Department of State

U.S. Agency for International Development

U.S. Department of Defense

U.S. Department of Commerce

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Peace Corps

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Critical Interventions: *Faith-Based Organizations*

Faith-based organizations possess an extensive geographic reach and a well-developed infrastructure in the developing world. Working under national strategies, in coordination with host governments, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (the Emergency Plan) draws upon the capabilities of faith-based organizations to contribute to an effective, multi-sectoral response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

With networks that reach even the most remote villages, many faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned to promote HIV/AIDS stigma reduction and prevention messages, as well as to provide counseling and testing, home care, clinical services, and antiretroviral treatment. Faith-based organizations also have the ability to influence the attitudes and behaviors of their community members by building on relationships of trust and respect. These attributes make them a valuable asset in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The following stories are just a few examples of how the Emergency Plan is supporting national strategies by working in partnership with faith-based organizations.

Faith-Based Communities in Kenya Take Action

Religious leaders' prominence in their communities and their ability to stimulate

grassroots responses make them critical to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS. Pastor Geoffrey Mbwana, president of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, explained the importance of a faith-based response this way, "We have to have no stigmatizing of people with AIDS; let them know that Jesus embraces them with His love."

In partnership with faith-based organizations, the U.S. Government is keeping its promise to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic...



Pastor Geoffrey Mbwana, President of the East-Central Africa Division of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, spoke out against stigma during his presentation at a regional workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.

With U.S. Government support, the ECD Seventh Day Adventist Church in Kenya hosted a regional workshop for 150 participants from five continents, including 19 people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Discussions at this event laid the groundwork for the denomination's HIV/AIDS policy and resulted in the Nairobi Declaration, which pledged to design the policy framework for churches in 10 countries in the region to establish HIV/AIDS programs. A policy and strategic plan developed and endorsed in 2004 is now being disseminated throughout the ECD regions.

Buddhist Monks Provide HIV/AIDS Care in Cambodia

With funding from the Emergency Plan, Buddhism for Development is helping to bridge the gap between the religious and secular communities in Cambodia. Buddhism for Development provides home-based care to people living with HIV/AIDS and services to children who have lost parents to AIDS. The group also



A monk provides home-based care to a young woman and her child through Buddhism for Development.

operates a six-week "Peace Development School" to teach about health care and HIV/AIDS, and about community participation, vocational-building efforts, and agricultural extension methods.

Of the more than 1,100 monks who have gone through the Peace Development School so far, many have returned to their home villages and have established HIV/AIDS associations that now carry out HIV-prevention services and home-based care. Many of these monks have also established centers to provide direct care for children who have been affected by HIV/AIDS. They have also worked to find ways to keep children in school.

Clergy Living with HIV/AIDS Unite

Shortly after losing his wife to AIDS in 1992, Ugandan Canon Gideon Byamugisha became the first African clergyman to openly declare his HIV-positive status. Since then, he has sought to eliminate HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination by advocating the "4 Es"—empathy, empowerment, equipment, and engagement; and the "6 Ps"—prayers, policies, plans, programs, personnel, and partnerships. With support from the Emergency Plan, clergy started to implement Canon Byamugisha's

approach in Kenya.

The Kenya Network of Religious Leaders Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS (Kenerela), the first such network in Africa, was established in February 2004 by 44 Muslim and Christian religious leaders

"For many AIDS patients, especially those who live in low-income areas or rural areas, a local church program or community health center is their only source for treatment and support. And to be frank about it, the church is the only place many people feel comfortable going to share their burdens."

**President George W. Bush
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at a retreat in Limuru, Kenya. Kenerela membership now totals 1,000 in eight provinces and includes HIV-positive religious leaders, clergy who have lost or are caring for close relatives, fellow religious leaders, congregants, and friends of the organization. Kenerela encourages congregations to provide home-based care, counseling, and peer education for people living with HIV/AIDS, and for local orphans and vulnerable children. Kenerela also works to increase capacity and interventions for assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Perhaps Kenerela's most important function is to provide accurate information, communication, positive role models, and nonjudgmental support to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Pastors in Swaziland Learn to Address HIV Issues from the Pulpit

More than 500 pastors from across Swaziland participated in an HIV/AIDS prevention conference from June 6–9,

2005 with support from the Emergency Plan. The conference was led by Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, author and Chairman of Dream for Africa, a faith-based organization. At the conference, Dr. Wilkinson trained the pastors on the best methods of talking appropriately and effectively to their congregations about sexual abstinence until marriage and about fidelity to one's partner. Because the unequal treatment of women—both culturally and legally—



Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, Chairman of Dream for Africa, and Pastor Zakes Nxumalo exchange greetings at the HIV/AIDS Prevention Conference for Pastors in Swaziland.

contributes to the spread of AIDS, Dr. Wilkinson challenged pastors to make clear to their congregations that men and women are, according to their own sacred text, created equal. Dr. Wilkinson shared with the participants specific verses of scripture that encourage women to own property and to make work decisions. One Zionist Church pastor who ministers to a small village said, "This is an amazing week. People like us have never ever been invited to come to a place like this and learn all these things and give our views on the problem. . . I never thought that we pastors could help stop AIDS. I'm going back to my church a new man, a new pastor."

President George W. Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is working in 15 of the nations most impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and in other nations worldwide to keep the American people's commitment to support treatment for 2 million HIV-infected people, support prevention of 7 million new infections, and support care for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans.